

*new*

*Joe Marshall*

# ANNUAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM PROJECT

## **citizen participation**

AN ASSESSMENT FOR SAN FRANCISCO


**july 1973**

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CITIZEN

PARTICIPATION

an assessment for  
san francisco

a background report  
prepared by the staff of the  
Annual Development Program Project

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## INTRODUCTION

This report was prepared for the Mayor of the City and County of San Francisco pursuant to the contract between the Mayor, on behalf of the City and County of San Francisco, and the U.S. Federal Regional Council, Region Nine, San Francisco, entered in July 14, 1972.

The report was prepared under the overall direction of a technical advisory committee of City and County officials. The Technical Advisory Committee members are: Allan B. Jacobs, Director of Planning and Chairman; William Becker, Director, Human Rights Commission; Nathan B. Cooper, Controller; Charles Countee, Director, Model Cities Agency; Francis Curry, M.D. Director of Public Health; George Grubb, Director of Budgets; Thomas J. Mellon, Chief Administrative Officer; Harvey Rose, Budget Analyst, Board of Supervisors; Robert L. Rumsey, Executive Director, S.F. Redevelopment Agency; John H. Tolan, Jr., Deputy for Development.

This report is addressed to the Citizens Committee for Community Development (CCCD). As specified in the original work program for this project, this report is an inventory of existing forms of citizen participation and an assessment of how citizens can be involved in an annual development program, now known as Annual Improvement Programming (AIP). As per the work program, the CCCD "will be asked to explore methods for optimizing citizen involvement and securing public participation in the preparation of an Annual Development Program."

This report is not prepared as a set of recommendations, nor as a list of alternative citizen structures. These are already being considered by the CCCD.





## P R E F A C E

Citizen participation is a phrase that has, over the course of recent years, taken on a variety of meanings and as a phrase has become the great salvation of some and the nemesis of others. It is nowhere clearly defined; separate pieces of federal legislation each give their own meaning. It is not consistently taken to mean the same thing by the same people: the War on Poverty called for "maximum feasible participation"; Model Cities legislation called for "widespread citizen participation". To some the phrase means involving all citizens in the review of federally-assisted programs. To some it means putting minority groups in charge of major governmental activities; to others it means merely buying off such groups.

For the purposes of this paper, "citizen participation" is taken to mean the process by which citizens participate in the decision-making processes of government. This definition is purposely broad, although its parts are dealt with in some detail in the ensuing text. What is important in this definition is that all citizens and all decision-making processes of government are considered. Citizen participation is here taken to mean involvement, although obviously such involvement does not mean that all who are involved can get what they seek. No single racial or economic group, no one segment of public activity is given exclusive attention. Using this broad definition of citizen participation, this paper will describe the existing forms of such participation in San Francisco and will suggest ways in which citizen participation can relate to any "annual improvement programming" that the City may choose to undertake, based on the recommendations prepared as a result of this study.

San Francisco has a long history of citizen participation. From its inception as a small Pacific port, the City has had a history of citizen groups banding together to set straight what they found lacking or abused in their local government. Vigilante committees have been formed from time to time to curb criminal activities not attended to by their local government and at one point one such committee actually took over responsibility for running San Francisco. In more recent years the City achieved national pre-eminence for its concerted citizen action in public battles to stop freeway construction, to save the cable cars, to prevent the commercial development of Alcatraz, and to limit the height and bulk of new buildings throughout the City. Unlike many American cities, the citizens of San Francisco have stood ready to pool their resources and energies to fight for what they felt to be highest priorities.





## EXISTING FORMS OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

While San Francisco has had a long and colorful history of ad hoc, large-scale citizen action on the pressing issues of the day, the City also has many legally established and many traditional forms of citizen participation. This is reflective of the activist nature of San Franciscans and is the basic fabric of decision-making in the City. While the ad hoc activity receives the most publicity, it is not the way in which most decisions are made in San Francisco, and the citizens of the City have many more important though less dramatic ways of influencing, or potentially influencing, public decisions. San Franciscans continually interact with their elected and appointed officials through many different channels. Listed below are some of the different forms of citizen participation in San Francisco, including those required in some official way and those which exist outside government, that have been established through long use and demonstrated influence.

### GOVERNMENTAL

There are a variety of bases for official forms of citizen participation, ranging from Charter requirements and State law down to the attendance by elected and appointed officials of neighborhood meetings. The broadest form of participation is the requirement that all meetings of public bodies be open to the public. State law, commonly referred to as the "Brown Act", requires that all meetings of public bodies be open to the public and advertised in advance, with certain limited exceptions such as discussions of personnel. In San Francisco there is even more restrictive legislation. A Charter revision, passed in the fall of 1972, requires that all committee and sub-committee meetings, as well as meetings of full boards, commissions, etc., be open to the public. This means that when even two persons of an official committee meet to conduct any manner of business that such a meeting be open to the public. A state provision that would require essentially the same thing is now pending before the legislature. This kind of legislation prohibits excluding the general public from meetings of official bodies, but it does not describe nor does it require citizen participation, as do other pieces of state and local legislation.

### Board of Supervisors

The most important form of citizen participation in San Francisco involves the Board of Supervisors. The Board, created by Charter, is composed of eleven citizens elected at large to four-year terms. The Board is not a full-time legislative body, and until recently individual Supervisors had little administrative and technical support. As the official legislative body of the City and County, the Board of Supervisors passes on all policy and fiscal matters involving local government. Because Supervisors are elected at large they do not represent any given geographic sections of the City, although certain Supervisors have tended to act as representatives of various ethnic, racial or social groups within the City.





The majority of the work of the Board is conducted by its eleven working committees which meet regularly in open meetings. Agendas for committee meetings are required to be made available 48 hours in advance of the meetings and citizens actively participate in committee meetings. Supervisors also receive and respond to a great deal of mail from their constituents and participate in meetings of community groups. These procedures and supervisorial traditions in San Francisco have meant that Supervisors are accessible and that there is a high degree of public participation in Board activities.

In recent years there has been increased discussion of the representativeness of the Board of Supervisors. Most San Franciscans agree that "at large" elections and the Board's tradition of public involvement in hearings insure a high degree of citizen participation. Some argue, however, that Board members be elected from districts to assure better representation. Supervisor Ron Pelosi has suggested the possibility of a Board elected to numbered seats or establishing another legislative "house" -- a district-elected city council -- to complement the "at large" Supervisors. A recent ballot proposition calling for the district election of Supervisors failed by a substantial margin.

### City Commissions

The second most important governmental form of citizen participation is the 21 boards and commissions which govern many City activities. Most members are appointed by the Mayor and traditionally have served at his pleasure. Certain commissioners, however, may be removed by the Mayor only after a hearing before the Board of Supervisors and a three-fourth vote by the Board.\* Many commissions are directly responsible for operating City departments and agencies. They are:

- Airports Commission
- City Planning Commission
- Civil Service Commission
- Fire Commission
- Housing Authority\*\*
- Public Library Commission
- Public Utilities Commission (Municipal Railway, Water Department, and Hetch Hetchy)
- Recreation and Park Commission
- Redevelopment Agency\*\*
- San Francisco Port Commission
- Social Service Commission

Membership on these commissions varies from three on the Police Commission to seven on the Library Commission. Most commissions have five members. These commissions are responsible for the ongoing administration of

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\*Civil Service, Recreation and Park, and Public Utilities Commission.

\*\*The Redevelopment and Housing authorities are created under state law, not City Charter, and depend almost exclusively on federal funds, not City revenues, for their operations.





their respective City agencies and involve themselves with administrative and policy issues. Some do, from time to time, initiate legislation that is then forwarded to the Board of Supervisors for final action. Of these commissions and boards, the Mayor appoints 58 of the 60 members. The two positions not appointed are the Chief Administrative Officer and the Manager of Public Utilities who are by Charter members of the City Planning Commission.

There are also boards and commissions that are advisory bodies or responsible for single functions. Some also act in a quasi-judicial function.\* They are:

- Art Commission
- Board of Permit Appeals
- Economic Opportunity Council
- Golden Gate Museums
- Health Service Board
- Human Rights Commission
- Parking Authority
- Retirement Board
- War Memorial Board

Membership on these bodies varies from five on the Board of Permit Appeals to twenty-nine on the Economic Opportunity Council. Of these commissions and boards the Mayor appoints 80 out of a total of 101 commissioners.\*\*

Among all boards and commissions the Mayor appoints 138 people to service on 21 separate bodies. The boards and commissions responsible for operating City departments have considerably more responsibility for the actual administration of City departments than is usually the case in cities with a large number of citizen commissions.

There continues to be a lively debate concerning the selection of commissioners. Minority groups have at times charged that commissioners are not representative of the City's population and that there should be more representation of racial and ethnic minorities. The present make-up of commissions, it is contended, gives undue emphasis to "establishment" interests. The counter-argument charges that because the commissions have a great deal of actual administrative responsibility, commissioners need to be persons with considerable experience in management and administration, not just representatives of the cultural and ethnic communities within the City. There is also the matter of time. Commissioners are paid only a token attendance fee. This tends to eliminate persons who cannot afford the uncompensated time. The Charter Revision Committee of 1969 proposed that commissions should have less administrative responsibility and that the membership more closely approximate the population characteristics of the City. Charter revision, however, has not had the popular support required for the changes proposed by the Revision Committee.

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\*The City Planning Commission also acts in quasi-judicial functions.

\*\*This does not include the membership of the Golden Gate Museums governing body which has a self-perpetuating membership.





### Public Hearings

A third form of governmental citizen participation comes in the form of public hearings. As already mentioned, all meetings of public boards and commissions are to be open to the public. In most instances advance notice of these meetings must also be given. Most notable are the hearings on the City budget. These hearings are held with the express purpose of hearing citizens' comments on the budget. Unlike a commission's meeting where citizens can observe the proceedings, the budget hearings are designed to solicit comments and criticisms.

There are also a number of public hearings held by various public bodies to seek comments from individuals and groups. The City Planning Commission has actively pursued this kind of participation, and during the past five years has held many public hearings to receive public comments on such matters as revisions to the Comprehensive Plan, neighborhood improvement plans, and proposed changes to the Zoning Ordinance. Last year the Mayor's Office held a series of public hearings to determine how the City should allocate General Revenue Sharing money. Because of this recent experience and because it is increasingly difficult for any public action to move forward without prior public participation and support, public hearings are becoming increasingly a prerequisite for major public actions.

### Other Required Participation

In recent years state and federal governments have required evidence of citizen involvement in projects they finance. Programs, such as Model Cities and Economic Opportunity, were in part designed as vehicles for greater participation in the local political process by economically disadvantaged groups. Other programs, such as urban renewal, incorporated citizen participation as one element within their ongoing procedures.

In certain instances there are specific requirements that a representative citizen group be formed to oversee or review the work of a given agency or program. In the case of redevelopment, for example, state law requires the establishment of local redevelopment agencies with a citizen board appointed by the Mayor. In addition, federal guidelines require that project area committees be established in projects for the rehabilitation of existing housing. The former group has both administrative and policy activity prior to execution. Federal regulations also require or encourage public housing tenant organizations, project area committees for Federally-Assisted Code Enforcement (FACE) projects, manpower planning councils, health planning councils, and a large number of other committees. Emphasis in poverty-related programs has shifted in recent years away from citizen groups having actual administrative responsibility to a more advisory responsibility.





The most recent federal legislation, General Revenue Sharing, requires only that a local government's allocations of funds be handled according to normal budgetary procedures and that the final allotments be published in a local newspaper; no further citizen participation is required. In San Francisco the Mayor's Office chose to take the programming of these funds to the citizens through a series of public hearings.

In the past ten years there have been a large number of state and federally-initiated committees, councils, etc., formed in San Francisco to deal with a variety of special assignments, such as the Mayor's Criminal Justice Council, Comprehensive Health Committee, and the Manpower Planning Council. In general the objectives of these groups have been tied more to the goals of the funding agency than to any overall City objectives. Recently, at the local level only, there has been an interest in bringing together these groups into some kind of structure that provides a degree of coordination and the potential for cross-fertilization. At the same time there is some local interest in developing more coordination among staffs for these groups.

These state and federally-initiated committees have encouraged a substantial amount of participation by both public officials and City residents. In many instances these committees have been given the responsibility for reviewing grant applications and allocating federal assistance to local projects. This situation may result in some problems by having members of recipient organizations sitting on those committees that approve their funding.

### Initiatives

The broadest-based form of citizen participation in San Francisco is the initiative. Growing out of the progressive tradition of involving citizens at all levels of decision-making, California adopted the initiative as a means of letting all voters make their opinion known on matters of current interest. In certain cases the initiative is used simply to register public opinion. It is also frequently used as a means of actually legislating, or passing ordinances. Similar to the initiative is the recall, a means by which the general public can vote to recall an elected official from office. Recall has been used seldom.

The number of initiatives on City ballots is increasing, although the process has been criticized by some as being too cumbersome and too confusing to the voter. Efforts have been made to make information on initiative issues more readily understood, and while more could likely be done in this area, no actual reduction in the number of propositions is achieved. The major advantage of the initiative is that it does make possible a vote by all citizens on an issue.

### Miscellaneous

In addition to the formal governmental citizen participation organizations and committees, there are a number of other official and semi-official groups. Various "ad hoc" committees have been formed by both the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to deal with specific issues, and these groups



have tended to be dissolved at the conclusion of their specific task. An example of this is the Charter Revision Committee which was appointed by the Mayor in February, 1968, pursuant to a resolution unanimously adopted by the Board of Supervisors. This committee was formed to address itself to the specific issue of revising the City's Charter. When a first series of Charter revisions were presented to the voters, they were turned down. This committee, and its staff continued to work for a short period of time but eventually ceased to exist as it became clear that it did not have the support of the general populace and some elected officials. The Citizens Charter Revision Committee was composed of twenty-one members and was broadly representative of the San Francisco community. This committee was provided funds to hire a professional staff.

Another example is the Chinatown Citizens Advisory Committee that was formed by the City Planning Commission to participate in a study of housing and recreational needs in Chinatown. This committee was instrumental in explaining the planning process to the Chinese community and in obtaining approval from the City and HUD to develop from 160 - 220 units of new housing and 2 new mini-parks in Chinatown.

Other committees have been formed and exerted a great deal of influence on such matters as downtown zoning, the Community Renewal Program, and improvements to Market Street. The Unified School District has created a large number of special committees, such as the Zone Councils, organized to deal with integration issues.

From time to time other forms of citizen participation have been utilized by public agencies to obtain information or to solicit views on various issues and proposals. Advisory committees, such as the Urban Design Committee, have been set up to handle special technical assignments. Other groups, such as the Human Rights Commission's Advisory committees of persons from the Native American, the Spanish-origin, and the Chinese communities, have been appointed to provide certain groups a forum to discuss their special needs.

Community meetings are another form of participation. Meetings in various neighborhoods have been held to deal with issues that specifically affect that area, such as meetings in the Sunset district on a proposal to run a streetcar line down Sunset Boulevard.

#### NON-GOVERNMENTAL

In addition to the variety of existing governmental forms of citizen participation, there are a series of other forms of citizen participation that affect public decisions but are created for other purposes and are not necessarily sanctioned or authorized in any official way. In many cases these kinds of organizations play a more important role in directing the activities of the City than do the committees and organizations established by local government.





## Neighborhood Organizations

San Francisco has long had a large number of neighborhood organizations. The latest list of such organizations prepared by the San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association (SPUR) includes 36 neighborhood associations, 27 improvement associations, 17 homeowners and renters associations, 29 merchants associations, and 8 miscellaneous organizations. Most of these groups have special interests or are concerned with specific geographic areas within the City. Some deal with commercial activities, some with residential amenities, and others with a broader scope. Many of the older groups were formed as protective association for maintaining certain cultural, social, or ethnic qualities of a given neighborhood. A number of recent community organizations maintain the emphasis on a geographic area, but their objectives have tended to be broader than the older protective associations. Some were formed especially to oppose older groups or were formed to promote activities that were unpopular with existing organizations. Some older groups split into factions over specific issues and became separate organizations. Some of the newer groups are more interested in city-wide activities than are older groups.

Umbrella organizations have been formed as coalitions of groups within a larger neighborhood. The coalitions represent neighborhood, commercial, and ethnic organizations within a given district of the City and have become increasingly powerful in working for improvements in physical and social conditions. Such organizations have been founded in the Sunset-Parkside, Mission, Ocean View-Merced-Ingleside and Richmond neighborhoods. In each instance these umbrella organizations have paid staffs working full- or part-time.

Some groups and individuals have sought to create a city-wide organization to act on behalf of all neighborhood organizations. No functioning coalition has yet emerged from these efforts to date, although there continues to be interest.

## Civic Organizations

There are a large number of civic organizations. They do not represent geographic areas but rather represent certain special interests. The Building Trades Council, the Chamber of Commerce, and San Francisco Tomorrow are examples of this kind of group. There are also ethnic groups such as the Filipino Organizing Committee (P.O.C.), the Mexican-American Political Association (M.A.P.A.), Chinese for Affirmative Action, the Jewish Community Relations Council, and the N.A.A.C.P.

Larger civic groups, such as labor unions and business associations, have paid staffs, are often linked with national associations and have long had considerable influence on political decisions at all levels.

In recent years there has been a marked increase in "public interest lobbies" such as environmental and consumer groups. These civic groups are becoming increasingly active at the local level as well as the state and national level.





### Staffing

Many large organizations have been criticized for having become overly powerful and failing to see political issues within a broader context. The organizations with large paid staffs maintain close contact with elected officials and current political issues. Smaller groups which cannot afford full-time staffs, and are relatively new to the political process, have found themselves "out in the cold".

Some argue that the smaller neighborhood organizations and civic groups need greater resources to provide themselves with staffs to compete with the larger organizations. Others feel that new organizations, such as the San Francisco Study Center, should be strengthened so that they can provide special staff services to smaller groups on a need basis. Still others feel that while support for smaller groups could be advantageous, neighborhood organizations and smaller civic groups are already "holding their own" and compete as equals in San Francisco's political arena.

### Service Organizations and Churches

A third group of organizations which plays a key role in political decision-making are service organizations, such as the YMCA, Salvation Army, and Family Services, and churches. These organizations assist public agencies in various capacities by providing social or cultural services, and to an extent held provide technical assistance and advice in shaping the policies of city agencies. Officials of service agencies and churches often sit on City commissions. Service organizations, because they operate full-time, have paid staffs that are able from time to time to work with community organizations and civic groups on a variety of public issues.

### Spontaneous Activity

The existing political structures in San Francisco both permit and encourage a considerable amount of spontaneous activity, and it is easier to point to examples of it than to attempt to define it. Some spontaneous activity takes the form of ad hoc organization, for which San Francisco is famous; groups have formed around specific issues not addressed by existing organizations. There are also acts by certain individuals that, depending upon their influence or press coverage, can make an impact on a political decision. For example, an automobile accident or series of accidents might prompt the installation of a stop sign at a given intersection. Law suits and individual testimony before the Board of Supervisors and City commissions have also been effective means of affecting public decisions. There are also spontaneous group acts, such as demonstrations or riots that have affected public decisions. San Francisco and its government is, and always has been, responsive to those spontaneous actions.



## GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY FOR CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

There are numerous expectations associated with citizen access to and participation in local government. At opposite ends of the scale lie society's ideal of complete participation and the impossible logistics of making all policy-making functions available to total citizen review. Citizens are the ultimate voice in public decision-making and should share in those decisions that affect their daily lives. Such participation is a part of the heritage and a means of continually perfecting a democratic process.

How is this accomplished? When can one say that participation has occurred?

There are obviously no simple answers to these questions. The past decade has been marked by a demand for citizen participation. The demands have come in many different forms and the responses have taken many different forms. If one conclusion can be drawn from this experience it would appear that there has to be a constant effort to make citizen participation an integral part of government, not a reaction to it. How this is to be accomplished is not simply answered. Most groups outside government agree that public officials need to be responsive to needs and considerations beyond those of the existing bureaucracy. Many governmental citizen groups agree that they need a clearer mandate from government as to their precise function and more real responsibility to carry out their functions. Almost all groups would like financial assistance to create or improve their staff capabilities.

Aside from the question of whether existing official citizen involvement provisions are adequate, there seems to be general agreement by persons in and out of government that the primary limitations on effective citizen participation are:

- 1) Lack of time.
- 2) Lack of information.

These are problems shared by both the government and the citizens served by the government. In San Francisco it can hardly be said that there is apathy on the part of citizens to participate nor even lack of willingness by government officials to encourage and permit participation. The major problem seems to be the amount of time, and consequently, money that is required for satisfactory participation. San Franciscans are increasingly aware of public decisions affecting them. In some cities, citizen participation has been channeled into a single group or organization of groups such as "community councils". Other cities rely on a system of political officials at the ward level. Such structuring is convenient for government agencies and seems to be satisfactory to citizens in some cities. In terms of time and money it is an efficient way to do it. But experience here suggests that it would not be satisfactory in San Francisco.

The large number of groups, the many diverse interests in San Francisco and their propensity to spontaneous action mitigate against this idea. As mentioned earlier, attempts by citizen organizations to form community wide coalitions have not been successful. For San Francisco the





route to improved citizen involvement is via more advanced notices of pending or contemplated actions and more time and opportunity to meet with public officials, i.e., more regular involvement in the day-to-day business of government.

There are two main characteristics of citizen participation in San Francisco: diversity and change. Any procedure or process which does not accommodate these characteristics is apt to fall short of the participation possible and desired. In the annual programming process, described in the following pages, emphasis is placed on developing a procedure that can provide a focus for the consideration of priorities for community improvement programs: a focus for both City officials and citizens. An important part of the proposal is to allow sufficient time for interested parties to review and examine the programs which have been brought into focus by this procedure. Time, opportunity, and awareness by community groups and individuals are the critical components. If these are provided, participation will occur. Therefore, in considering how citizen involvement will occur in annual improvement programming, it is suggested that efforts be concentrated on time and opportunity rather than on new formal participation structures or an official participation "mechanism".





## ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMMING

A series of recommendations for improvement in the City's management systems was made as part of the Annual Development Program Project. These recommendations were adopted unanimously by the project's Technical Advisory Committee. These recommendations were forwarded to the Mayor for his consideration on July 16 of this year.

In the report, annual improvement programming is described as "a process which might be incorporated into the existing regular budget procedure"; it has three main components:

- a) the development of a plan or strategy for achieving some agreed upon goals or objectives for community improvement;
- b) an evaluation of proposed programs or projects for community improvement or development in relation to the plan or strategy, and;
- c) a method for presenting the results of the program evaluation in terms of priorities for proposed projects or programs to be funded on an annual basis.

Annual improvement programming is recommended for the purpose of providing comprehensive information on proposed community improvement projects or programs at an early stage before budgets are being considered so that priorities can be discussed and evaluated in advance of budget preparation.

### State of City Message/Preliminary AIP Report

The recommendation report suggested that the Mayor utilize the Charter-required "State of the City" message to make a public statement on his budget priorities for the coming year. This would be a preliminary annual improvement program report, which would attempt to define within major policy areas such as transportation, community development, etc., those activities which the Mayor believes to be the City's highest priorities for the coming year. These priorities would be based upon consideration of City-wide improvement objectives. The message would be delivered in early October. The issuance of this statement would accomplish two primary objectives. First, the statement would focus attention on all major priorities of the City at one time. It would attempt to order priorities in the context of a comprehensive, City-wide plan for improvement. Second, the statement would provide an opportunity for both public officials and citizens to assess the City's priorities both within policy areas and among policy areas. For example, there would be a chance to compare priorities between such program areas, as transportation and health services.

The preliminary AIP Report would be widely distributed so that all interested citizens would have the opportunity to see it and review it. The main advantage of the report would be that, for the first time, both citizen



groups and public officials, would have a document addressed to priorities for community improvement programs and as a context for consideration of budget requests in the coming fiscal years.

The recommendation committee recommended a final AIP Report by the Mayor in March which would reflect input from citizen review of the preliminary report.

### Department Budget Preparation

At the present time there is no focus for departmental budget preparation. The AIP Report would provide a focus for budget priorities. After that, the responsibility lies with individual City departments and agencies. The present system places a heavy work load on any citizen group that is interested in a variety of projects, for they must make their requests known to each City agency that would be involved. By responding to the Mayor's Preliminary AIP statement, such groups can comment on the Mayor's priorities and can request that certain programs or projects receive priority status that may not have been mentioned in the Mayor's statement.

There is little uniformity now in the way in which the various City agencies prepare their budget requests and how they respond to citizen requests or complaints. Part of this is due to the fact that some departments report to a Commission; some to an elected official, like the Sheriff; and some to the Chief Administrative Officer. Commission meetings are open to the public, and groups can attend those meetings at which the coming year's budget requests are reviewed. Some departments, such as the Department of City Planning, hold a public hearing on a proposed work program to solicit citizen comments before a final decision is made. Others do not. Those departments reporting to the Chief Administrative Officer do not have a forum similar to commission meetings at which work programs and budget requests can be discussed publicly. To date, citizen organizations have had to rely upon City agencies making themselves accessible to the public for the review of the budget.

The recommendations report includes no format on how and when interested citizens would participate in the annual improvement programming process except that a time frame of four months was suggested for a period of discussion and review of the preliminary AIP Report. As stated previously, the important elements of citizen participation in San Francisco are ample notice, i.e., a chance to know about and understand a proposal or an issue or time to present one's own proposal or issue and ample time, i.e., time to react, question or make counter proposals. The period of four months is judged to be the maximum that could be allowed and still fit within the tight requirements and budget preparation. Whether the four months period is ample time for citizen involvement in the development of the AIP Report remains to be seen. The preliminary AIP Report would provide the notice in this instance. It should be noted that the four month period under discussion is for involvement in the review of the AIP Report. The involvement in the total AIP process would occur in various ways throughout the year. The AIP process would augment regular budget hearings and citizen participation in the Board of Supervisors' consideration of the City budget.





It is anticipated that citizen participation in the annual improvement programming process would occur in much the same way as involve in the City's first revenue sharing proposals occurred, i.e., through public meetings in various parts of the City prior to formal hearings before the Board of Supervisors.

Potentially the annual improvement programming process will present better budget information in a more useful form for citizen review and provide an opportunity to consider priorities and arguments for or against these priorities prior to the formulation of the City budget and its final consideration by the Board of Supervisors.





## SUMMARY

Citizen participation and involvement in San Francisco government is noted for its variety as well as its extent. Citizens are not apathetic when it comes to community issues. This is true whether the issue is community wide or one confined to local neighborhood issues.

Citizen participation takes many forms. Some is provided for by legislation or ordinance or, in the case of federal programs, as a condition of funding. There are both formal and informal structures. In recent years groups or individuals that have not traditionally been represented by established special interests of common interest organizations have gained a stronger voice in government partly through government sponsored programs and partly through their own invitation. Categorical aid funding for Federal programs spurred a series of "official" citizen participation structures and mechanisms often sometimes assisted by staff paid for with public funds. A more recent phenomenon are coalitions of a number of groups and organizations for a common purpose, such as responding to the Model Cities program. They often perform a watchdog role over proposed government programs. These self-initiated structures appear to be more desirable and more successful than those instigated by government agencies. This is especially true when a group is large enough or otherwise able to employ a staff.

The traditional method of participation in decisions on public issues has been through the public hearings required by elected officials. More importantly, the provision for adequate advance notice, is unusual for cities the size of San Francisco. This traditional form of participation has come under heavy criticism recently by those who feel that the Boards and commissions are not truly representative of all interests and all citizens. A number of changes have been proposed as a result of these criticisms and some changes have been made.

The road to better and more satisfactory citizen involvement in San Francisco seems to be in the direction of providing more time prior to official decisions so that citizen and community organizations can review, hold discussions with and question elected officials and obtain better information on the issue at hand. The oft heard plea that citizens should be involved "from the beginning" on community issues can be partially met by recognition that more advance time is needed for most public issues if citizens are to feel satisfied that there has been ample opportunity to participate. Coupled with this is the need for better information and better dissemination of information.

The annual improvement program process proposed to the Mayor is an attempt to provide better information on City priorities and proposed community improvement programs. There is a recognition in the proposal that time to participate in the process is important; otherwise, the main benefit of the process would be lost.

Formal structuring of a process for citizen involvement in the annual improvement process seems inadvisable. Interested individuals and groups will participate if allowed to but would probably resist being compelled to follow



a uniform procedure. A time frame has been suggested that provides for a period of review of the proposed annual improvement report in order to fit within the established budget procedure. This will impose certain limits on the amount of time that City officials can spend meeting with community groups and the time in which response can be made. Once the process is started, however, the involvement will likely be almost continuous. It is in the nature of the process.

In other areas there must be continued effort on the part of the City officials to meet the changing needs for citizen involvement and to recognize that formal public hearings are often not sufficient. There must be recognition also by citizens that there is a practical limit on participation, that one feature of democratic government is a fair degree of reliance and responsibility on those that have been elected or appointed to act in their behalf.

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